Love the convenience of ATMs? Online banks often charge only 11 cents per transaction and may even reimburse the fee. Others participate in ATM networks so you won't have any transaction fees. See the next story to learn more about online banking.

Simplify your bank switch

Avoid bank split-up stress when you follow these steps before closing your old account.

- Check to see if the bank you're considering offers a switch kit to make the transition easier.
- Open an account at your desired new institution.
- Stop automatic payments from your old account, and switch them as needed to your new one.
- Leave enough balance to cover any checks or payments waiting to clear.
- Switch direct deposits to your new account.
- After remaining bills connected to your old bank have been fulfilled, you should feel comfortable closing your old account.

How savvy savers put more money in their pocket

You have a nest egg tucked safely away at your brick-and-mortar bank. But advertisements for online savings accounts have you wondering if you could be earning more interest.

So do you switch? Well, consider that accepting a below-average interest rate is like giving yourself an extra fee. The common 0.01% rate at brick-and-mortars doesn't even keep up with inflation.

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Imagine you deposit $5,000 in savings online with an interest rate of 2%. After five years you'll earn $520.40 in compounded interest. If you do the same at 0.01% interest, you'll earn just $2.50 in interest. And the difference becomes more significant the longer you leave it in.

That definitely gives you a motive to switch. Here are more reasons you may want to take the plunge and open an online savings account.

Leave behind wall-to-wall fees. Online banks pass on their overhead cost savings to their customers by imposing fewer fees. The majority don't have a monthly maintenance fee. Those that do often have lower ones, saving you between $57 and $163 every year.

You can be sure your bank is secure. You want easy access to your money without the risk of someone else slipping in. Luckily, verifying an online bank is simple — just check the FDIC BankFind page online at *research.fdic.gov/bankfind*. You can feel protected when you know your institution is insured by the government.

Feel safe and sound with stellar safeguards. When looking for an online bank, make sure it offers strong security measures to protect your personal information. Look for features like multi-step verification, which requires more than a password to log in. The extra security could be a fingerprint or code sent to your phone.

You can help keep your information safe with these easy steps.

- Use secured Wi-Fi networks.
- Change your passwords regularly.
- Get text alerts for large transactions.

Help is available whenever you need it. Don't forget to make use of your internet banking customer service. Assistance is typically available by phone call and either online or through their app — some round the clock.

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